

1955

Regional and Local Historical Societies

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org



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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1955) "Regional and Local Historical Societies," *Florida Historical Quarterly*.
Vol. 34 : No. 1 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol34/iss1/9>

REGIONAL AND LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

As always, the Historical Association of Southern Florida has been active during the past two quarters, but because of the Osceola Number of this *Quarterly*, we have made no mention of their activities during this period.

Three regular Program Meetings have been held. Their 51st., on January 17, was featured by an address "The Prisoner of Shark Island," by the one man most qualified to speak on that subject. Dr. Richard D. Mudd came from Michigan to tell of that prisoner, his grandfather, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, who was imprisoned in Fort Jefferson on Dry Tortugas for setting the broken leg of John Wilkes Booth in his flight from Washington after shooting President Lincoln.

At the April Meeting a full-blood Seminole, Mike Osceola (a surname which has been often adopted in the tribe) described "Seminole Ceremonies and Dances" with the dancers in native dress.

The 53rd. Program Meeting was held in May with the Annual Meeting of the Association. The feature was an address "Adventure on the High Seas; Filibustering Against Spain" by Professor Samuel Proctor, of the University of Florida, who has made a study of and published a biography of Napoleon Bonaparte Broward. The address was especially on his filibustering steamers *Three Friends* and *Dauntless*.

Also at this meeting Mr. Ernest G. Gearhart Jr., vice president of the Association, gave the Association's own slide illustrated talk "The History of South Florida in Pictures."

The program of placing markers in the region continues. The last one honoring James Deering as the builder of Vizcaya.

The *President's Newsletter* was issued regularly with notes of historical interest.

TEQUESTA

THE JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHERN FLORIDA 1954. NUMBER XIV

In the fourteen numbers of *TEQUESTA*, published annually since 1941 by *The Historical Association of Southern Florida*, a great part of the history of that region is told – and told well. Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau has edited ten of the fourteen. He gave us the third issue, that of 1943, and has produced all since 1946 including the last one, that of 1954. Nowhere else, of course, is there so extensive a history of Southern Florida, and due to the editors' care and skill these volumes are outstanding and are a noteworthy accomplishment. For history, no strict geographical lines can be drawn, so the recording of the history of all of Florida is the gainer through the work of Dr. Tebeau and his contributors.

Fort Zachary Taylor at Key West

The massive walls of Fort Taylor are now seen by a growing herd of tourists, and so the leading article in this issue of *Tequesta*, an account of the fort and its construction by Ames W. Williams, has a wide appeal. It is authoritative, having been written largely from the records in the War Department. Three full-page half-tones add to the interest. Also interesting is the statement that much of the common labor in its construction was done by slaves, hired from their masters, who of course received their pay.

Fort Taylor and Key West, with Fort Jefferson on Tortugas, and Fort Pickens opposite Pensacola, were the only areas in the Confederacy remaining throughout the War for Southern Independence in the possession of the United States.

Miami

F. Page Wilson writes of "Miami: From Frontier to Metropolis: An Appraisal," which is a full-length article narrating

numerous incidents as well as little known facts on the history of Miami from Mrs. Tuttle, through Flagler and Merrick, to today.

The Baptists

The churches came with the first groups of settlers and grew up with the country. The founding and growth of one denomination in this region is recorded largely from original sources and hence with accuracy in The South Florida Baptist Association by George C. Osborn and Jack P. Dalton based mainly on the Reverend Dr. Dalton's doctoral dissertation "A History of Florida Baptists."

Spanish Indians

The term Spanish Indians has long puzzled those interested in the early history of South Florida, especially the southwest coast, for it is often found in the early narratives and records of the region. In a late issue of *Tequesta* (XIII, 1953) William C. Sturtevant, after an extended search through all known sources, brought together both what can be found in written history, and what he learned from investigation of surviving Seminole tradition. (see *Fla. Hist. Qy.* XXXII, 296). Another piece of documentary evidence, edited by James W. Covington of the University of Tampa, is included in this issue of *Tequesta*. This is a petition signed by certain descendants of that portion of the Spanish Indians who were of mixed Indian and Spanish blood.

Destruction of Florida Lighthouses in 1861

Dr. Dorothy Dodd has edited for this number a document from the archives in Tallahassee which is a report to Governor Madison S. Perry from "Volunteers . . . [who] believing it a solmen [*sic*] duty of every citizen to try and serve his State and Country in whatever capacity he may be most able, would in accordance with such feelings, report to your Excellency, that we have taken the responsibility of putting out the Lights at both Jupiter Inlet and Cape Florida, believing them to be

of no use to our Government, but to de contrary, of great importance to our enemies. . . .”

The Historical Association of Southern Florida

A roster of the many hundreds of members of the Association is included, which is proof of the growth of the body and the wide interest which has been engendered in the history of the region among the newcomers as well as the natives and older residents.

JACKSONVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Papers

The Jacksonville Historical Society has issued Volume III of their *Papers*. As this is a book of 188 pages of carefully written articles, it takes a place as one of the important histories of the Jacksonville region. The author, James C. Craig, has been a staff writer on the Jacksonville *Times-Union* since 1929, and has published therein numerous historical articles. It was recognized by the Society that many of these are of unusual historical value and should be preserved in a more permanent form than a newspaper file. The Editorial Board of the Society selected thirty-one of these, choosing mainly these which “fill the gaps in readily available books on this area’s history.” The Board members are: H. H. Buckman III, *Chairman*; Audrey Broward, Mrs. Karl Bardin, Herbert Lamson, and Dena Snodgrass.

Five hundred numbered copies were printed, and it may be obtained from the Society, P.O. Box 4343, Jacksonville. By becoming a member of the Society, at two dollars annual dues, you will receive a copy. They are sold at two dollars to non-members.

A late issue of the Society’s *Newsletter*, Number 9, told of the Quarterly Program Meeting on March 10. The feature was an exhibit of “Stampless Covers from Florida’s Territorial Days,” with descriptions of these and other early stamps used in Flor-

ida, all from the collection of Mrs. Harold Major Pickett of Jacksonville, who told of them.

The new volume of *Papers* was distributed at this Meeting.

The latest issue of *Newsletter*, Number 10, related to the Annual Meeting of the Society on May 11. The feature was "Tales of the Ten Thousand Islands." Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau of the University of Miami, who has long been interested in and has done much research on that unusual section of our State, was the speaker. He is now editing for publication by the University of Miami Press the most important of the *Collier Papers*, covering all of the southwestern section of Florida as well as Collier County. The area and its history is little known outside the region, but we shall know the best of it ere long.

Election of officers took place at this meeting, and brought Miss Dena Snodgrass to the presidency. She has held other offices in the Society and has, through unremitting work for its aims, become a mainspring of the organization. Dr. Carita Doggett Corse is the only other woman to have held that office in the many years the body has been active. Miss Snodgrass has for some years been an officer of The Florida Historical Society, and is now recording secretary and a director of that body. Other officers elected were: Dr. Raymond H. King, first vice-president; Karl Bardin, second vice-president; Martha Lee Sequi, recording secretary; Mrs. W. E. Mott, corresponding secretary, Florence Morrish, treasurer; Audrey Broward, archivist; Herbert Lamson, historian.

ST. AUGUSTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Escribano" No. 1, Jan., 1955

(*The Scribe*)

"In Spanish St. Augustine the Escribano, which freely translated means scribe or notary, was an important figure. One of the few in the frontier community who could write, he recorded

events and testimony, and vouched for its accuracy. To him we owe much of what we know of early St. Augustine, and it seems fitting, therefore, to name the newsletter of the St. Augustine Historical Society in his honor."

So *Escribano* joins the newsletters of the Florida Historical Society and those of several of the local associations, and will bring us, as well as the members of the body, regular news of what they are doing and plans of their projects, of which they have several under way.

This issue tells of "a new museum on the history of St. Augustine on which we have been working for more than a year." Also, because of the new routing of U. S. Highway No. 1, which will by-pass city traffic, a reproduction of Cubo Redoubt, a fortification whose site was west of the Castillo, will be built on the new highway.

HALIFAX HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Halifax Historical Society, with headquarters at Daytona Beach, has been active as usual, and markers are being placed, in cooperation with the Volusia County Historical Commission, on historical sites of the region. W. L. Coursen is president, and Mrs. Ianthe Bond Hebel, secretary.